

HOUSE RESOLUTION 27

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Mattie Ray for her service to the children of Youth Town.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to recognize those individuals who dedicate themselves to the needs of the youth of this State without thought to or expectation of what they might receive in return; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mattie Ray is one such estimable individual who, through her work with the residents of Youth Town, has brought hope to countless teens and adolescents in dire need of compassion and guidance; and

WHEREAS, before working at Youth Town, Mattie Ray owned apartments, managed dollar stores and a bank, and operated the Thunderbird Motel in South Jackson along with her husband, who also worked as a truck driver; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Ray thought she had found a suitable vocation thirty years ago when she bought a nightclub in Three Way, but she soon realized that the business would not allow her to thrive; and

WHEREAS, Mattie Ray then had a spiritual experience and turned to the Bible, studying it thoroughly over the course of two years; and

WHEREAS, eventually, at the behest of Youth Town Executive Director Nick Pappas, Ms. Ray began working at Youth Town, offering her spiritual strength and unconditional love to young people with behavioral problems and substance abuse issues; and

WHEREAS, at the Youth Town Christian Residential Treatment Center, located ten miles outside of Jackson, a dedicated staff of professionals has been working with troubled youth and their families since it was first chartered by the State of Tennessee in 1962; and

WHEREAS, throughout a typical day at Youth Town, groups of staff and residents periodically gather in the study of Mattie Ray's on-site home not only for prayer sessions but also for the company of a kind and gentle woman who has become like a grandmother to so many of them; and

WHEREAS, graced with humility as well as a compassion, Ms. Ray often insists that her work is more of a boon to her own spirit than it is to those of her young charges; whatever her protestations, Mattie Ray is to be commended and applauded as a shining example of Christian selflessness; and

WHEREAS, individuals such as Ms. Ray, by serving as living lessons in love and generosity, stand as signposts to the people of Tennessee, guiding them up that narrower path that leads to a higher destination; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and recognize Ms. Mattie Ray for her caring service to the youth of this State and the great nation of which it is a part, thank her for giving of herself so freely to those in need, and wish her every success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.